THE GREAT
ESTIMATE
That redounds by Croſſes, &c.

As it was delivered in

A

SERMOM,

Preached at *Sraue* in *Kent*, on the 29. day of *Auguſt*, 1649.

By *Samuel Spinckes*, Miniſter of Gods Word, there.

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To the Reverend Doctours, and Miniſters in the County of *Kent* in generall, more eſpecially to all my loving Brethren, the Miniſters in *Romney* Merſh, all felicities internall, externall, and eternall, be multiplied.

Right Worſhipfull:

I Preſent unto you heere a Sermon, whoſe Text ſpeaketh of affliction, yet no ſharpe ſcourge neither, but rather a comfortable electuary for Gods childe; for happy (I dare ſay) are they whoſe eyes are opened by croſſes and afflictions, as that thereby they come to true ſight and hearty ſorrow for ſinne, which is the cauſe of afflictions. I confeſſe I am not yong in yeares, though in judgement, yet now I begin, as once I did at the A. B. C. *for the Primer is fit firſt to begin at for learning, and there now I begin at* A. *for there my Text begins; I intend with two Sermons more (God willing) to begin at* B. *and* C.

If I were asked a reaſon why I durſt be ſo bold to make a Sermon publick, or any thing elſe in this learned Age, ſeeing there are ſo many and learned mens workes abroad already, both for learning and judgement? I anſwer, that ſeeing ſo many mens

workes (and learned ones too) are deſpiſed (as it were) or at leaſt, little ſet by of the vulgar ſort; I therefore thought, I ſpeaking and writing (as my manner is) plaine and Country like, would ſee if the rude vulgar Country would better like of a Ruſtick teaching, then they doe of thoſe that are more learned and better indoctred. For I ſee (by accompanying and familiarity with the vulgar and meaner ſort) that the poorer and ſimpler the worke and matter is, many times it is the better accepted. But what ſaith the Proverb, whoſo bold as blinde Bayard? But whither ſhould a ſhrub go better for ſhelter then to Cedars? I know (though little acquainted amongſt you) I have to this, Patrons worthy, and to my poore power, although I be weake and Country like, and not able to carry Timber, or Morter, or ſquare hew'd Stones, yet ſome rough ſmall Pebbles I deſire to caſt into the Treaſury, a Mite (for Talent I have none) with the poore Widdow: Worthy Gentlemen your zeale (how ever other waies it hath been conſtrued) is ſuch (as I have heard) that I cannot but honour you, and if you will pleaſe to Patronize this, then as Plato did immortalize Phœdon by his Treatiſes; ſo ought and will all good Paſtors and people that knew you, eternize your names in immortall Monuments of eternall glory. But as the fire of love retorting from you enflames in my breſt, for what once I found from you, that much water cannot quench it; but not to be tedious, I beſeech your Worſhips poize the minde of the Giver, which is (if it may be) more then the guift, whatſoever it is; it is for your uſe; and whatſoever I am, I am for your ſervice,

In what lies in poore

Samuel Spinckes.

The

The great Eſtimate that redounds by Croſſes.

XENOPHON ſpeaketh with good conſideration; to wit, that wee have *Oculus, manus, pedes, binos, ut conjuncti ſe adjuvent, non impediant:* that is, eyes, hands, and feet, two of each, that joining, and joined together, one may become an helpe to the other. *Sic decet fratres:* ſo becometh it brethren to have eies, hands, and feete one for another: As it is in the Proverbe, how the man that was blinde carried the lame man on his back, and ſo lent him his legs, the lame man guided the blinde, and ſo lent him his eies.

But I remember [a] what the Philoſopher ſaid; that Order was the mother and preſerver of all things, for which cauſe the Apoſtle in 1 Cor. 14. 40. will have all things to be done in Order: for God (ſaith he there in verſe 33.) is the God of Order, and not the Authour of Confuſion. As for diſorder that dwells onely in Hell, the place of woe and miſery, and therefore, Gen. 11. 9. Babel is made a type of it, which ſignifies nothing but confuſion. But that I may not confound my ſelfe in a confuſed manner, and for that alſo it is growne out of uſe and cuſtome, otherwiſe, being as I am, ſwallowed

[a] Arist. Polit. lib. 2.

up with griefe and ſorrow, I ſhould but that it is not uſuall, at this time have delivered my poore and diſtracted Meditations without a Text; but for order ſake, and that we may build the ſtronger, I beſeech you harken with reverence and attention unto one word of the

Text. Apoſtle St. Paul, as it is written Rom. 8. 18. *Afflictions.* being the ſixth word in the verſe; whence note ye:

That the holy Apoſtle Saint Paul gives inſtance of the afflictions of the Saints and children of God here, rather than of their vertues, workes, and actions; be-

Peter. cauſe (ſaith one) their actions and workes were more painfull: and the Apoſtle applies a great deale of comfort, not onely in this verſe, but alſo in moſt of this Chapter, and that eſpecially in regard of thoſe times (much like theſe daies of ours) wherein there was ſuch great perſecutions for the name of Chriſt: where, and from whence then in the firſt place, from this word *Sufferings* or *Afflictions*: let all Priſoners, and all Gods children, that ſuffer any croſſe or trouble whatſoever, learne never to deſpaire for any miſery that may befall them, but ſtill hope for the beſt, Eſay 63. 9. for the

Jer. Lam. 3. 58. Lord hath already numbred the daies of thy life, and of thy ſorrowes, Eſay 42. yea I ſay, it is the Lord that hath taken notice of thy paine and trouble, therefore feare not, but be patient under the Croſſe, and behold the goodneſſe of the Lord, Exod. 14. 13. for all our miſeries and troubles ſhall one day be ended.

Object. But here peradventure ſome may object and ſay, it is true; I know it will one day bee ended: but what ſaith the Proverb? *whilſt the graſſe grows, the Steed ſtarves.* Wherefore I feare I ſhall faint in ſuffering, it will be ſo long before I am eaſed: unto which I anſwer.

How

How knoweſt thou it will bee long before thou beeſt eaſed therefrom? hath the Lord told thee ſo? then abide his pleaſure although it bee to thy paine: well! but hath he not told thee ſo? then make not thy troubles and afflictions longer or greater by thy imaginations then they are: for God that makes the Oakes ſubject to the greateſt windes, hath given them the largeſt and deepeſt roots, to ſtay them up withall: and ſo if God do tempt thee with great and long calamity and trouble, yet happy man art thou, for he tempteth none above their power; and if God load thy daies with ſickneſſes, or poverties, or loſſes, or paines, or wounds, or infamy, or ſervitude, or impriſonment, or with any manner of afflictions whatſoever, yet know thou ſhalt be able to abide it, if God hath ſent it; for our croſſes and afflictions in this life are not proportionable or worthy of any equality of that incomperable glory that ſhall be revealed: For our ſufferings here are but little, few, and ſhort, intermixed with joy, and ſuch they are as we have juſtly deſerved, by reaſon of our ſins. Reſpon.

Firſt, I ſay, our ſufferings here are little, according to that of the Apoſtle St. Peter: After ye have ſuffered a little, &c. 1 Pet. 5. 10.

Againe ſecondly, they are few, in reſpect of the variety, and multitude of joyes that are in Gods Kingdom, according to that of the Prophet, Pſal. 16. 11. In Gods preſence is the fullneſſe of joy, and at his right hand pleaſures for evermore.

Thirdly, theſe our ſufferings here are ſhort; for, afflictions are but for a moment, but the glory thereof ſhall be eternall, 2 Cor. 4. 17.

Fourthly, theſe our ſuffrings here are mingled and a-

layed with joy and comfort: as the Apoſtle ſaith in 2. Cor. 1. 5. as our ſufferings abound, ſo our conſolation aboundeth much more in Chriſt; for in the life to come, to the godly, there ſhall be glory, immortality, incorruption, ſplendor, ſtrength, and an eternall Sabboath of reſt, an everlaſting Feſtivall of felicity, Songs of glee, Halelujah's of triumph, fulneſſe of all joy, and pleaſures in the preſence of God, of Chriſt, of Saints, and of Angels for ever: I ſay glory without any mixture of trouble, or griefe, ſo ſaith the Holy Ghoſt, Revel. 21. 4. that God ſhall wipe away all teares from their eies. Nay, again laſtly, our ſufferings here are a due debt, in reſpect of our iniquities; for there is not any croſſe, but it is juſtly laid upon us for ſinne, Pſal. 32. 5. thou forgaveſt the puniſhment of my ſinne; and ſaith the Prophet, man ſuffereth for his ſinne, Lament. 3. 39. but everlaſting glory is the free gift of God: it is not otherwiſe due, but by the grace and mercy of God, by the merit of Chriſt. I ſay it is the gift of God, according to that of the Apoſtle, Rom. 6. *ult.*

Now croſſes and ſufferings here are common to good and bad; therefore St. Peter would not have any ſuffer as an evill doer, 1 Pet. 4. 15. but the glory to come is onely promiſed to the righteous, and therefore it is called the liberty of the ſons of God, as ye may ſee here in the 21. verſe of this 8. Chapter to the Romans. And now to put all theſe together; the ſufferings and afflictions of this life are nothing comparable to the joy and glory of the next life (not to the Elect) neither in qualitie nor quantitie: for the qualitie, the ſorrowes of this world cannot be ſo great as the joyes of the next: and for the quantitie, they are but ſhort and light, becauſe

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the life of man is but ſhort; but ſeventy yeares, or eighty at the moſt, ſaith Moſes, Pſal. 90. 10. Saint *Bernard* ſaith, that good works are not any cauſe of meriting a Kingdome, but yet ſaith he, good workes are a way directing to a Kingdome. *Sufficit ad meritum ſcire, quod non ſufficiant merita:* it is ſufficient to know of merits, that there are no ſufficiency of our merits; for ſeeing good works are no cauſe, neither have any correſpondency or proportion in them, in reſpect of the glory to come, therefore the Apoſtle ſaith in 2 Cor. 4. 17. that our light afflictions which are but for a moment, worke in us a far more excellent and an eternall weight of glory.

Now then let us here and hence learne, that the poſ- Uſe.
ſeſſing of our ſoules in patience, is a way directly tending to the ſalvation both of our ſoules and bodies, unto which our bleſſed Saviour ſubſcribeth, where he ſaith, that the gate is ſtrait, and the way narrow which leadeth unto life, and few there be that finde it, Mat. 7. 14. whence againe let us learne, that this ſtraitneſſe and narrowneſſe of afflictions are not a cauſe which deſerveth, but a gate or way which leadeth unto life: and therefore it is ſaid, that through many tribulations wee muſt enter into Gods heavenly Kingdome, Acts 14. 22. not by many tribulations, as one well ſaith; no, not by any tribulations we muſt merit Heaven, but by many tribulations, as by a gate or way, we muſt enter into the Kingdome of Heaven. *Eucherius* ſaith, *Nihil eſt magnum, quod breve tempore:* nothing is of great importance, which is of ſhort time. Now, as I ſhewed a little before, our lives are of ſhort continuance, therefore ſaith the Apoſtle, Jam. 4. 14. our life is as a vapor, which for a time appeareth, but preſently vaniſheth.

Wherefore the Kingly Prophet ſaith, O Lord, thou knoweſt my life, Pſal. 56. 8, 9. The Originall word is, thou knoweſt my flittings, or removings; and therefore ſeeing our whole life is but a vapour, or a removing from hence, certainly our afflictions, which are all comprized within the compaſſe of this life, muſt needs be ſhort and momentany; for all afflictions, as the Apoſtle ſaith, Heb. 12. 11. for the preſent ſeeme not to be joyous, but rather grievous, but afterwards it bringeth forth the quiet fruit of righteouſneſſe to them that are exerciſed therewith: where, and from whence I pray marke, the Apoſtle doth not ſay, that afflictions are grievous, but ſeeme to be; ſo that afflictions ſeeme to bee one thing, and are indeed another; for, they ſeeme to be grievous, but they are indeed joyous; they ſeeme to be troubleſome, they are indeed ſweet; they ſeeme to be long and tedious, they are indeed ſhort and comfortable, even as God himſelfe determineth this matter: in a moment ſaith hee, Eſay 54. 8. in my anger, for a little ſeaſon have I hid my face from you: but in everlaſting mercy I will return unto you again.

And now that we ſhould not doubt of this Doctrine, the Lord, as you ſee by that his Evangelicall Prophet Eſay, redoubles his promiſe, for a moment, for a little ſeaſon ſaith he; wherfore the princely Prophet ſaith plainly, that heavineſſe may laſt and endure for a night, but joy commeth in the morning, Pſal. 30. 5. 6. as the two Angels that came to *Lot* lodged with him for a night, but went away againe in the morning, Gen. 19. 2. ſo afflictions, which are the Angels, or meſſengers of God, they are ſent by the Almighty, for to tell us we forget God, we forget our ſelves, we are too proud, too ſelfe-

conceited,

conceited, and ſuch like, and therefore to humble us are afflictions ſent. So alſo we read, that the ſpirit of life returned unto the two witneſſes, which had beene ſlaine by the Beaſt, after three daies and an halfe, Rev. 11. 10, 11. and why after three daies and an halfe? to teach us, that ſickneſſe, perſecution, impriſonment, or any kind of calamity, or afflictions whatſoever, may tyrannize over us three dayes and an halfe, but they ſhall not fill up the whole foure dayes; for, for the Elects ſake thoſe dayes ſhall be ſhortned, Mat. 24. 22. and agreeable to that, *John Baptiſt* began his preaching with Repent, for the Kingdome of Heaven is at hand, Mat. 3. 2. Repent, that's a mater of mortification and Afflictions to the fleſh: for the Kingdome of heaven is at hand, that's a matter of joy and comfort to the ſpirit. And our Saviour ſaith, behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, Revel. 22. 12. all theſe to him that underſtandeth is matter of great comfort; and let us alſo know, that trouble and vexation bring knowledge and underſtanding. Nay, let us alſo further note for our future comfort, that in our croſſes and afflictions, we have many compartners and fellowes, which make the labour of our afflictions comfortable unto us; as namely firſt, the ſympathizing of all Gods creatures, for ſo ſaith the Apoſtle in the 22. and 23. verſes of this Chapter, that all creatures ſigh and grone with us.

Secondly, all the faithfull and deare children of God beare one anothers burthen, and ſo fulfill the Law of Chriſt, Gal. 6. 2.

Againe, the good Angels, for our comfort have a charge of us, Pſal. 91. 11, 12. Nay, God the Father biddeth us in all our croſſes and afflictions, to caſt our burthen

burthen upon him, and hee to our ſolace and comfort promiſeth to nouriſh us, Pſal. 55. 22. Nay further, the Holy Ghoſt helpeth our infirmities, yea, I ſay, it helpeth us even then, when we are ready to faint, as ye may ſee here in the 26. verſe of this Chapter.

Nay further, in our Afflictions God the Son ſetteth to his hand, ſaying, Come unto me all ye that labour & are heavy laden, and I will refreſh you; take my yoke upon you, for my yoke is eaſie, and my burthen is light, Mat. 11. 29. 30.

Oh what a wonderfull comfort is this to all thoſe that ſuffer any kind of trouble, impriſonment, or whatſoever other Afflictions, to thinke that all creatures, all the faithfull, all good Angels, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghoſt, do all pertake with us in our Afflictions! This ought then to teach us Patience in all our troubles and Afflictions whatſoever.

I did thinke to have handled this word in particuler words; but becauſe it is but one word, therefore I will gripe it together, and intreat thereof in generall.

Affliction is a means to purge out that droſſe of naturall corruption that remaines within us, &c.

To goe forward then: *Afflictions* (to thoſe that are truely godly) do not only miniſter comfort, as you have had a little taſt thereof already, but alſo it produceth many gracious and bleſſed effects: for, firſt it is a means to purge out the droſſe of that naturall corruption that is within us. For, ſo long as wee enjoy proſperity, it is with us as the Prophet ſaith of *Moab*, wee are like wine ſettled on his Lees, and frozen in his dregs, Jer. 48. 11. and which hath been poured out from veſſell to veſſell, Zeph. 1. 12. ſo we are full of the dregs of naturall corruption till the Lord by *Afflictions* doe refine us.

Afflictions are unto the Children of God, as the Flaile

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is to the Corne, the File to the Iron, and the fire to the gold: as the Flaile doth purge the corne from the chaffe which groweth up with it, and as the File ſcowreth off the ruſt that cleaveth and ſticketh upon the Iron, and as the fire purifieth the Gold from the droſſe; ſo doth Affliction by Gods mercy, purge away from us that chaffe, that ruſt, that droſſe of ſinne that is in our nature. The Gold-Smith taketh not the Gold out of the Forge, till hee ſeeth it well and throughly purified. In like manner, God doth not remove the Afflictions of his children, till they be throughly refined: Nay, Afflictions are like unto the Lords Pruning-knife (as I may well ſay) whereby he cutteth away from us all withered and unprofitable branches.

When *Placilla* the Wife of *Theodoſius* a believing Empreſſe (ſhe bore ſuch good will to the afflicted members of Chriſt) would reſort unto the Almes-houſes, and Hoſpitalls of the poore for to ſee them ſuccoured and relieved; and when her nice Gentlewoman that waited on her would dehort and diſſwade her not to debaſe her ſelfe to come into ſuch meane places, or neare ſuch poore dejected people; ſhe then with teares in her eies would reply and ſay: Oh! I would not doe this, and this onely, but alſo ſo and ſo; yea, and much more for the love that I beare to my Saviour Chriſt, and to his bleſſed Members how meane or baſe ſoever they were, for I owe my ſelfe and all that I have to him ten thouſand waies. Oh worthy ſpeech of a noble Matron! did ſhe an heathen thus *Dorcas*-like provide, and feed Chriſtians after her converſion? how much more ſhould we that are borne Chriſtians doe good one for another, and follow the Apoſtles words, to be of like affection?

Rom. 15. 5. for, how dare you, O ye ſons of Belial, harme, or hurt, or diſgracefully deride, or perſecute with hand, heart, or tongue thoſe that are in afflictions or bonds? ſeeing Chriſt our Saviour like them ſuffered much Afflictions, whoſe word was ſo potent, that by it hee created the univerſall world; by it he caſt out Devils; ſtilled the raging waves of the impetuous Sea, healed incurable diſeaſes, vanquiſheth Sathan, and conſumeth and overcommeth Antichriſt, 2. Theſſ. 2. 8. of whom, what ſhall I ſay? he being wonderfull, Eſay 9. 6. and that in his Conception, in his Birth, in his Death, in his riſing, and in his actions: yea, he it was that humbled thee, and ſuffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with Manna, &c. Deut. 8. 3. yea, he it was, that wrought firſt, ſtrong matters with weake meanes, as the converting of a ſinner. Secondly, ſome matters with no meanes, as King *Aſa*, &c. 2 Chron. 14. 11. and *Adam* had Plants provided without raine, and light without Sun, *viz.* light the ſecond day, and the Sun the fourth day, Gen. 1. Thirdly, hee it was that wrought great matters with ſmall meanes, as the feeding the five thouſand with five loaves and two Fiſhes, and againe another time with ſeven loaves hee fed foure thouſand.

Mt. 14. 17. &c. Mark 8. 19, 20.

Fourthly, he wrought other ſome matters with contrary meanes, as bringing light out of darkneſſe, 1 Cor. 4. 5. and laying clay upon the eyes of a blind man, Joh. 9. and ſo of *Elizeus* caſting of meale, &c. 2 Kings 4. and of Manna forty yeares bread for Iſraell, &c. He it was I ſay, that fed multitudes (as you have heard) with little; and thus he wrought ſtrange miracles; for he overcame death, Sathan, and Hell; and he it is that ſhal come to Judge both the quick and the dead; yea, he is Chriſt

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the anointed Almighty God; and yet ſome do not dread to lade with tauntings, ſquibs, villainous reproaches, all helliſh language & uſage, ſuch as for their good deeds ſuffer for Chriſt; yea, & they are ready to uſe thoſe at their pleaſure, who are the redeemed of this Redeemer, the holy ones of this Sanctifier, the Children of this Preſerver, the Souldiers of this Captaine, the Servants of this Lord, the Brethren, and Siſters of this Jeſus our elder Brother by nature, and are by adoption and grace. The Subjects of this King, the Bride of this Husband, the ſheepe of this Shepheard, and the members of this head. I dare ſay, thoſe that ſuffer croſſes and Afflictions are Chriſts ſheepe, for whom he layd downe his life, John 10. 15. they are branches in Chriſt, who ſhall obtaine what they aske, *eod.* 15. 7. ſuch are Chriſts Souldiers quenching the fiery darts of the Devill, Epheſ. 6. 16. and ſuch as overcome the world, 1 John 5. 5. nay, ſuch are Chriſts Patients which that good Phyſitian heales with his owne bloud, 1 John 1. 7. and theſe are of Chriſts flocke whom hee rewards with Kingdomes, Luke 12. 32. nay, theſe afflicted ones are Chriſts Beloved Spouſe, for whom he gave himſelfe, Epheſ. 5. 25. and yet the wicked and ungodly feare not to grieve and vex ſuch; but yet to our comfort let us know, that it is our portion to be hated of all, for Chriſts ſake, to bee a by-word to fooles, as Job was, Job 30. 6. 7. 8. ſongs to Drunkards, as David was, Pſal 69. 12. wee are thoſe that muſt looke to be falſely accuſed, and railed upon; but here are our comforts, that Chriſt our head & Husband hath drank deep in this cup to us before, therefore let us be content to pledge him, knowing it is the lot of Gods Children, and for our profit; for, wee are made

more bright by ſuch our filing, more purified by ſuch tryings, more odoriferous by ſuch poundings; for, wee are the Lords Vine and we ſhall grow the more fruitfull by pruning; we are his Palmes, and therefore doe flouriſh moſt, when moſt under preſſures: nay, though we be ſcoffed and ſcorned, yet to our comfort be it ſpoken, if with patience we endure chaſtening, we ſhall be the Lords tillage, whoſe hearts are more mollified and ſoftned, and by ſuch deridings made more apt for the ſeed of heavenly truth, and true ſaving graces; and more fruitfull and leſſe weedy by the taunts and reproaches of ſuch wicked plowers.

Oh! therefore let me here exhort all thoſe that are under the Croſſe with patience and contentment, and with gladneſſe, to ſuffer all helliſh indignities of the wicked, even then when they plow upon the backs of the innocent, and make long furrowes, Pſal. 129. 3. nay, I dare ſay, our betterrings, by their ſcourgings, and tauntings, or miſuſings, comes not from them, for they aime at nothing leſſe, being helpers forwards of our croſſes and afflictions, even then, when our heavenly Father was but a litle diſpleaſed with us, Zach. 1. 15. But yet they from our Fathers love and bounty make all things worke together for our good, as it is in the 28 verſe of this Chapter: ſuch in the end ſhall therefore ſmart for vexing and grieving of us; they being as I may ſay our heavenly Fathers rods, yet they ſhall bee plagued with indignation, after they have chaſtized and corrected us: witneſſe the hard hearted Ægyptians, *Ahab*, *Jezabell*, the three *Herods*, the firſt butchering the harmeleſſe Innocents, for which there is a day ever ſince called Innocents day, celebrated every yeare by

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our Church the 28. day of *December*. The ſecond beheading *John* the *Baptiſt*; and the third martyring St. *James*. As alſo for this in hand, witneſſe cruell *Nero*, bloudy *Domitian*, *John de Roma*, *Minerius*: and in Queene *Mary*'s time, ſtinking *Gardiner*; witneſſe the 42. children mocking the Prophet, *Iſhmael* ſcoffing at *Iſaac*, curſing *Shimei*, railing *Rabſhakeh*, and others: nay further, to our everlaſting comfort, let us know that Afflictions being ſanctified do bring a man to the ſight of his ſins, and to godly ſorrow, and to true repentance for the ſame: for, as Saint *Gregory* ſaith, ſin ſhutteth a mans eyes, but Afflictions do open them; and hereof we have a worthy example in the brethren of *Joſeph*; for, for the ſpace of twenty yeares, they were never touched with any remorſe for their unnaturall cruelty, in ſelling their owne Brother to the Iſhmaelites, till at the laſt comming into Ægypt to buy corne in the time of the famine, and perceiving *Joſeph* to ſpeak roughly unto them, and to charge them to be Spies, that came to ſee the weakneſſe of the Land: and ſo fearing impriſonment or ſome other hard meaſure, then they began to call their former ſin to remembrance, and to ſay one to another, as it is Gen. 42. 21. wee have verily ſinned againſt our Brother, and ſo forward.

Afflictions being ſanctified to us, will bring us to a true ſight of our ſins. *Greg.* in Moral.

Even as one that is faſt aſleep will not awake, unleſſe he be raiſed by thruſting, or by ſome ſuch violent motion: ſo many lye ſnorting in the long cuſtome of ſinne, and never thinke of repentance, till the hand of God be upon them. And as the horſe that runneth into the Battle, Jer. 8. 6. neither feareth the enemy that commeth againſt him, nor is terrified with the dolefull groanes of dying perſons, nor with the noiſe of the Guns,

nor yet with the ſhaking of the Pikes: ſo wicked men are carried headlong to ſinne, and neither feare the roaring of the Devill, nor are moved with the miſerable ends of others before their eyes, nor yet terrified with the feare of Hell, but as the horſe runneth with violence, being checked by his Rider with a ſhort Bridle, is enforced to ſtay his courſe; ſo when ſinners run into all exceſſe of riot, the Lord in mercy by one affliction or other, as it were with Bit and Bridle, even by ſtrong hand pulleth them back, and cauſeth them to ſee their ſinnes, and by that meanes bringeth them to repentance.

So then from hence ye may ſee, that God uſeth his corrections as Sermons to call thoſe that belong unto him from their ſins, which many times are more forceable and effectuall than any verball preaching, accor-
Auguſt. in Pſal. 50. ding to that ſaying of Saint *Auguſtine*, many men when they feele the ſmart, then (ſaith hee, and not before) they will reforme the fault. Now what greater benefit can there bee than this, for a man to bee brought to unfeigned repentance for his ſinnes? without which there
Bern. in Pſal. 32 can be no hope of forgiveneſſe. And therefore *Bernard* ſaith ſweetly, it is a good Affliction that bringeth a
Affliction will teach humilitie even in the beſt of Gods Children. man to compunction and remorſe; therefore ſaith *David*, it is good for me that I have beene afflicted, Pſal. 119. Nay further, Affliction is a notable means to humble the child of God, and to beat down the pride of his heart; for, ſo long as all things goe well with us, and we are free from the croſſe, ſo long (I ſay) as it is thus, our fleſh will be puffed up, and it will hardly be kept under, the leaven of old *Adam* is in us, and maketh us ſwell in pride.

As the Moone never ſuffereth Eclipſe but when ſhe

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is in the full, and then alſo ſhe is furtheſt diſtant from the Sun: ſo likewiſe we, when we abound in outward proſperity and are full, ſuch is the fooliſh pride of our hearts, we are puffed up, and care leaſt for God, till by ſome Affliction or other hee humble us and bring us downe. Thus was it with the Prodigall ſonne, as ſoone as he had got his portion of his father, Luke 15. then he was full of pride, and could ſtand on no ground, as we ſay; but when hee had waſted his ſubſtance, and was pinched with poverty and famine, then his pride was daunted, and hee was glad to come home by weeping croſſe. So was it alſo with *Hagar*, Gen. 16. 4. &c. when ſhe had conceived a childe by her Maſter *Abraham*, ſhe was preſently ſo lifted up with pride, that ſhe deſpiſed her Miſtreſſe *Sarah*, becauſe ſhe was barren: But afterwards when her Miſtreſſe had dealt roughly with her, and made her run away into the wilderneſſe, then ſhe cried *peccavi*, and humbled her ſelfe under her hands: yea, *David* himſelfe, though otherwiſe a holy man, and a man as the holy Scriptures record him, according to Gods owne heart, yet he had a ſpice of this diſeaſe, as himſelfe confeſſeth in Pſal. 30. 6. 7. where he ſaith, that in his proſperity, he thought that he ſhould never be removed &c. Loe, there you may ſee how ſoone a man (though moſt holy) is apt to forget himſelfe, if hee enjoy but a little proſperity: but alas! the caſe was ſoone altred with him; for, as he further ſaith in that Pſalme, the Lord did hide his face and bring him into ſome affliction; and then ſtraight way he was troubled. And therefore in this reſpect we ſee afflictions are very neceſſary and profitable.

Acts 13. 22.

See *Aug.* in Pſal. 51.

The reaſon of this point of Doctrine is good, becauſe they

The Reaſon.

they cauſe a man to know himſelfe, as we ſee by common experience, when God afflicteth a man either with ignomy and diſgrace in his name, or with poverty in his eſtate, or with ſickneſſe in his body, or with loſſe of children, or with impriſonment, or with any ſuch like croſs and calamity, though before he was never ſo proud, and carried himſelfe never ſo high, yet then he begin-
[e] Plut. in Apoth. R g. & Imp. neth to droop, and let his feathers fall. *Antigonus* [e] though an heathen King, when he was taken with a little ſickneſſe, and had recovered thereof, he could make this good conſtruction thereof, namely, that it was well for him, that he had been ſick and ill; for his diſeaſe had taught him, that ſeeing he was but a mortall man, he ſhould not too much lift up his ſpirit: And this (I ſay) is the goodneſſe of God towards us, as Saint *Auguſtine* [f] ſaith, that becauſe the ſweetneſſe of earthly
[f] Aug de vera Relig. things doth deceive us, and puffe us up, therefore wee ſhould be humbled, by the bitterneſſe of Afflictions.

Afflictiõs will cauſe the godly to bee the better, & readier to pleaſe God. Nay further, Affliction is a meanes to reforme the godly, and to make them better: yea, that which *Solomon* ſpeaketh of children, Prov. 22. 15. is true alſo of aged perſons, that folly is bound in their hearts, *&c.* And therefore the Apoſtle ſaith well, in the 1. Cor. 11. 32. that when God correcteth, he chaſteneth his children, it is to nurture them (as a loving father doth his ſonne) for reformation and amendment; for, the Lord knoweth, that a ſonne ſet at liberty, runneth into ſuch licentious idle courſes, that he is a ſhame to his father, and a griefe to his mother, and therefore he will not ſuffer his children, eſpecially thoſe whom he loveth, to go on in their ſinnes, leſt his name ſhould be diſhonoured, and his holy Goſpel evill ſpoken of, but by correcti-

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ons and crosses rather, he laboureth to reclaime them: So that this must needes be a happy (g) and blessed affliction, as *Bernard* saith, that maketh a man better, and such are the force of afflictions, that through the Apostles bonds many were bettered and strengthened thereby, Philip. 1. 14.

[g] De præcepte & dispensat.

Nay, afflictions are a notable and excellent prick to force us forward, and to egge on, and stirre us up unto prayer: Yea, even they that never meant to imploy themselves that way, as Atheists and wicked persons, yet when any trouble lyeth upon them, then it drives them to prayer, whether they will or no. As truely the Prophet saith, that such as rebell against God in the time of famine, when they want Corne and Wine, then these will not stick to houle upon their beds, Hos. 7. 14. and *David* reckoned a bead-roll of such persons in the 107. Psalme, as ye may read it at your best leasures, *viz.* the 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 13, 19, 26, and 28 verses esspecially. So then you see it is plaine, that trouble and affliction will make any man to cry unto the Lord, and to betake him to his prayers. So was it with the Mariners, Jonas 1. 5. when they were in distresse, then (saith the Text) they cried every man to his God. And so likewise the proud King of *Ninive*, with all his people, when they heard the sudden destruction that was threatned against them by the preaching of *Jonah* then, Jona. 3. 8. they cried mightily unto God. And that wicked *Manasses*, 2 Chron. 33. 6. &c. who did very much evill in the sight of the Lord to anger him; shedding innocent bloud exceeding much, 2 Kings 21. 16. yet when God brought upon him the Captaines of the King of Ashur, which took him, and put him in fetters, and bound him

Affliction will cause men to cal upon God by prayer.

Job 20. & 21 chap.

in chaines, and carried him to Babell, then when hee was in priſon ſaith the text, he prayed to the Lord his God: yea, the Godly themſelves are never ſo fit to pray, as when they are in afflictions, though they be carefull to pray continually at all times, and upon every occaſion, yet they never pray with ſo great devotion and fervency, as when ſome heavy croſſe or calamity is upon them; for then feeling their miſery, and their owne inability to help themſelves, they then more earneſtly fly unto the Lord for ſuccour and helpe. As the Prophet ſaith, in that day, that is, in the day of trouble, Eſay 17. 7. ſhall a man looke to his Maker, &c. and in their afflictions they will ſeek me diligently, Oſee. 5.15. And indeed to ſpeake as it is, and as I my ſelfe have obſerved it, both from my ſelfe and others, how in our proſperities all of us both good and bad, too full of ſecurity, as though we ſtood in no neede of God. As the Lord complaineth of *Jeremy*, I ſpake to thee when thou waſt in proſperitie: but thou ſaidſt, I will not heare, &c. Jer. 22. 22. &c. And ſo *David* ſaith of the wicked and ungodly, that becauſe his waies alwaies proſper, &c. therefore he is proud, as it is Pſal. 10. 4, 5. And the Prophet *Jeremy* compareth ſuch perſons to the wild Aſſe in the wilderneſſe, that ſnuffeth up the wind at her pleaſure, Jer. 2. 24. and it is in vain, ſaith he, to ſeek to turne her back, but in her month, that is, in her foaling time, then a man may deale with her. And as the little chickens when the weather is faire, and there is no danger towards, then they'le ſtraggle a great way from the Hen: but if any haile-ſhower come upon them, or a Kite hover over them, then they haſte under her wings for ſhelter. And as the

1. Theſſ. 5.17.

Stag,

Stag, when he is at liberty, will not come neare a man, but when he is hotly purſued with dogs, then he will run to him of his owne accord for ſuccour: ſo it fareth oft times with us, when we are at eaſe and nothing doth moleſt us, then we are ready to turne our backs upon God; but when we are brought into any diſtreſſe or danger, then we are glad to repaire unto him for help. This you may ſee plainly to be true, and if at your beſt leaſures you doe but read the 107. Pſalme, &c. *Si bene eſſem, ſine te, non venirem ad te*: as one confeſſeth of himſelfe, (and it is our caſes as well as his) if I could be well without thee, then I would never come at thee. As the water when it is at large, and hath ſcope enough, then it runneth with a ſtill and ſilent motion, but being brought into a ſtraite, then it maketh a great noiſe: In like manner, when a man is at large, then he looketh not much at this duty of prayer; but when hee is in afflictions, and (as it were) in ſtraits, then hee will excite and ſtir up himſelfe thereunto: So did the Children of Iſrael, in the time of their bondage, then they ſighed and cried, and made their moane unto God, Exod. 2. 23, 24. And we read in many places of the Book of Judges, that howſoever in their proſperity they were untoward and careleſſe of God, yet when God raiſed up any new enemies againſt them, then they cried unto him. And that Kingly Prophet *David* ſaith of himſelfe, that although before, while he thought his mountaine to be ſtrong enough, (as we have heard) he was fooliſh and proud; yet when God hid his face from him, then he cried unto the Lord, Pſal. 30. 8. And ye may obſerve, that moſt of the Pſalmes were made when the Authours thereof, or rather the Pen-men thereof (for

Eſpecially Judges the third and fourth Chapters.

the Holy Ghoſt was the Authour) were in ſome afflictions or other: yea, our bleſſed Saviour Chriſt himſelfe, though all his life time he was much converſant in prayer, ſometime riſing early in the morning before day, Mark 1. 35, 36. and ſometime ſpending the whole night therein, and yet he never prayed more earneſtly, nor more fervently, than immediately before his Paſſion: when hee offered up prayers and ſupplications with ſtrong crying and teares, Heb. 5. 7. yea, he was ſo fervent therein, that he ſweat, and his ſweat was like drops of bloud, trickling downe to the ground, Luke 22. 44. Thus you may perceive then by all that hath been ſpoken, that Afflictions are as it were a Whetſtone to ſet an edge upon our devotion, and to ſharpen our hearts unto fervent prayer; let the ſimple honeſt ſoule then come hither, and learne this great eſtimate or profit that redounds to him by croſſes and afflictions: if you be riſen with Chriſt, who was afflicted for your tranſgreſſions, then ſeeke thoſe things that are above, Col. 3. 1, 2. Chriſt hath opened Heaven for thee, therefore make no long tarrying, but enter into the holy of holieſt; for now thou O diſconſolate ſoule! art paſt the utter and inward Court, for thy Mediator is in Heaven, therefore pray thou here on earth, that he may heare in Heaven, and ſo ſpeake for thee: Our fleſh is in Heaven in the perſon of Chriſt, whereby we ſee that the glory we have won by Chriſt, is greater than the diſgrace & curſe that the mallice of the Devil brought upon us by *Adam*. The Devils malice and our ſin caſt us out of Paradice; but Chriſts ſufferings for ſin, makes us ſit in heavenly places with him. Our Triumph you ſee is in heaven, who would not fight the Battell then manfully

Ubi ergo portio mea regnat, ibi me regnare credo ubi caro mea glorificatur ibi gloriosum me cognosco, ubi sanguis meus, dominatur ibi dominari: mi sentio. Auguſt. meditat. cap. 5.

fully againſt the fleſh, the world, and the Devill, being aſſured by the Captaine of the victory? Here then we may alſo further perceive how God tenderly and lovingly dealeth with us, even as *Moſes* ſaith, he dealt with his own people the Iſraelites.

And how was that? even as the Eagle doth with her young: the Eagle covereth her young with her wings, ſo God doth with the wings of his protection ſafely guard thoſe that be his: The Eagle ſometimes perceiving her young ones dull and drooping, ſhe gently pecks them with her beak, to ſtir them up: ſo God by Afflictions doth quicken his children; yea, ſometimes the Eagle will take away her young ones meat, and flyeth up therewith into the aire, and hovereth aloft, to entice and provoke them to practice and endeavour to flie up and to ſoare on high. Even ſo God the Father hath received up Chriſt Jeſus our heavenly Manna into glory, that we ſhould learn to aſpire and ſoare upwards, that where he is we might be alſo: and to this end the two Angels told us at his receiving up into glory, that he ſhould in the ſame manner deſcend to judgement in the end of the world, which we expect with patience, nay, long, and looke for, and crie in our hearts, come Lord Jeſus, come quickly, Revel. 22. and we doe nothing more ſeriouſly, while we are on earth, but call to minde, (or at leaſt ſo it ſhould be) in holy meditations, the Lords death, and ſhew it to the eies of our faith, untill his comming againe, in pertaking of his bleſſed body and bloud in the Sacrament, that by the power thereof we may be eſtabliſhed, that we turne not this great grace into wantonneſſe, nor neglect our Lord Jeſus, who is thus exalted into the higheſt glory, not for himſelfe,

ſelfe, for he had that glory before the world was, but for us his redeemed people: ſo that now here is the exaltation, and ſuper-eminent height of faith, even life everlaſting: The being thereof is called glory, and our eſtate there glorification. To this doe all the godly agree and aſpire, that they may be where their Saviour and anointed is, Jeſus Chriſt, to behold his Majeſty, and his glory in the Kingdome of God the Father: the Metropolis of which Kingdome, is the heaven of the bleſſed, the confines are eternity, the chaires of eſtate are the Thrones, the houſes of the Courtiers are the Viſions of Angels and Saints; God is there as the King, Chriſt as the Prince, the Church as the Queene, the Virgins as the Hand-maids, the Nobles as the Patriarks and Prophets, the Notaries are Evangeliſts, the Prelates are the Doctors of the Church, the Souldiers are Martyrs, and the Subjects are all the bleſſed ones.

In which Kingdome are all things to be deſired: deſire you Riches? [k] glory and Riches are in his houſe: deſire you gold? [l] the City it ſelfe is of pure gold: deſire you honour? [m] O God! ſuch honour as this glory have all thy Saints: deſire you pleaſures? [n] at Gods right hand are pleaſures for evermore: deſire you knowledge? [o] in Chriſt are hid all the Treaſures of Wiſedome and Knowledge: deſire you liberty? [p] Jeruſalem which is above is free: love you Peace? [q] my people (ſaith God) ſhall ſit in the beauty of Peace, and in the Tabernacles of my protection: deſire you dainties? [r] you ſhal be ſatisfied when his glory ſhal appeare: deſire you Wine? [s] you ſhall bee filled with the pleaſures and plenties of his houſe, and ſhall drinke of the Rivers of gladneſſe: doth muſick delight you?

[k] Prov. 19. 14. Eſt. 5. 11. [l] Revel. 21. 18. [m] Pſal 149. 9. [n] Pſal. 16. 11. [o] Col. 2. 3. [p] Gal. 4. 26. [q] Pſal. 96. 9. [r] Levit. 9. 6. & Pſal. 102. 16. [s] Prov. 3. 10.

[t] here

[t] Heere Cherubin and Seraphin continually doe cry, holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabboth. O tell me? what delectable thing ſoever can come into your imagination? nay, I rather tell it you that in Chriſt it is in full abundance to be found: For, God hath ſayd it, come, and I will ſhew thee all good? Will not theſe motives perſwade you that your croſſes and afflictions are ſeaſoned and ſanctified unto your everlaſting comfort by and in Chriſt? [t] Cant. 5. 1 Eſay 6. 3. Pſal. 107. 9.

Affliction cauſeth obedience.

Nay, our afflictions doe continue and keepe us within the liſts of obedience. For, it is with the beſt of us, as *Agiſelaus* ſayd of the Athenians, *liberi mali ſunt, ſervi boni*, that when they were at liberty, they were naught, but when they were in bondage they were good; ſo we in our proſperity, [u] doe ſtart aſide like a broken bow; but when affliction commeth, we then are ready (no force) to ſubmit our ſelves to the Lords yoake: and this doth *David* confeſſe, when he ſaith, Pſal. 119. 67. that before he was afflicted he went aſtray: and the Church acknowledged, that before the Lord corrected her, ſhe was like an untamed calfe, Jer. 31. 18. Though man was created after the Image of God, and advanced to great honour, yet if God let him alone, he then will become like the beaſts that periſh, Pſal. 49. 20. And therefore the Lord threatneth the rebellious Jews, that he will ſtop their wayes with thornes, *&c.* Hoſ. 2. 6. where the Lord by his Prophet ſheweth that neceſſity requireth that he ſhould hold them in with ſevere diſcipline and ſharpe corrections, comparing them to wanton and unruly cattell, which muſt be kept in with thornes, as it were with hedges and pales, leſt they go aſtray. [u] Pſal. 78. 57.

Afflictions will keepe the fleſh in ſubjection and obedience to the Lord.

Nay

Nay, afflictions helpeth to tame and ſubdue the unruline ſſe of the fleſh, that it rebell not againſt the ſpirit. Afflictions are very profitable to bridle and mortifie the luſts of the fleſh, Gal. 5. 17. For they are one of theſe deadly enemies of the ſoule, with which we muſt incounter and fight with whilſt we live: Now as he that were to enter a ſingle combate with an adverſary that were ſtronger then himſelfe, ſuch an one I warrant you would be glad of ſome body that would firſt foyle and weaken that adverſary, that ſo he might the more eaſily overcome him; in like manner the children of God have cauſe to rejoyce, that it pleaſeth the Lord by outward calamities and croſſes to tame the fleſh, and to tread it under foot, that ſo they may with leſſe difficulty and danger get the victory thereof. Againe, afflictions are meanes to withdraw our hearts from the love of the world, and to raiſe them up to deſire cœleſtiall things. We are like to fooliſh children, that are loath to be weaned from the breaſt, and therefore the mother annointeth the Nipples of her breaſt with ſome bitter thing, to make the childe out of love with it: ſo likewiſe if we might have our wills, then we would alwaies hang upon the breaſts of the world, and would never leave ſucking theſe earthly commodities, without any regard to heavenly, if the Lord did not powder our deſires with the Croſſe, and ſo make them bitter unto us: The Children of Iſraell, though they were grievouſly afflicted in Ægypt, to make them more earneſtly deſire to poſſeſſe and injoy the land of Canaan; yet you may ſee and read in Exodus, and Numbers, and Deuteronomy, and other places, how hardly they were brought to depart from thence.

Afflictions will draw our minds from earthly to heavenly things.

Yea, when they were in the way to *Canaan*, they would often have returned back againe into *Ægypt* to their fleſh pots, their fiſh, their pepons, and the like, Numb. 14. 3. 4. Now what would they have done thinke you, if they had lived in preferment there, and enjoyed the fat of the Land, as they did in *Joſephs* time? Gen. 45. 18. It would no doubt have been a hard matter then to have perſwaded them to depart; ſo it fareth now with the moſt of us; for we are in this world as in a ſea of miſery, never out of one danger or other, yet ſuch is our folly, that we love to be here ſtill. Now then tell me? what would we doe if we never had any thing to moleſt us? It is a lamentable thing to conſider that our minds ſhould be ſo dazelled with the glittering ſhew of riches and pleaſures, with other idle objects of this tranſitory world; ſo as they cannot looke up to heaven, that our hearts (I ſay) ſhould be ſo preſſed with coveteouſneſſe and ambition, and the like, that they cannot raiſe up themſelves unto heavenly cogitations, and that our ſoules ſhould be ſo inſnared with the pleaſant inticements of the fleſh; ſo as they ſeeke onely for their felicity and joy heere upon earth: And therefore the Lord in mercy to prevent this evil doth by dayly experience of miſeries, croſſes, and afflictions, ſaith *Calvin*, put his children in minde of the vanity of all earthly things, leſt they ſhould promiſe to themſelves a conſtant & a continual peace in this world; yea, he ſuffreth them many times to be diſquieted and moleſted, with penury, impriſonment, and the like; leſt they ſhould with too much greedineſſe gape after thoſe brittle and tranſitory things. And if it fall out that the Lord ſpare us in theſe, yet leſt we ſhould ſwell with pride, or rejoice with fooliſh confidence, [illegible]

Exod. 16. Numb. 11

Gen. 47. 11.

Nos ſumus in mundo ut puſio in area, &c.

Calvin. inſtit. lib. 2 cap 9. ſect. 1.

chaſten us with one croſſe and affliction or other, that ſo wee may learne how fraile and unſtable all earthly things are. Oh! let the hearing of thoſe things by you, and the ſpeaking of thereof by me, ſtir, and lift up our eies and hearts to heaven, where that uncorruptible Crowne of glory is laid up for us. And thus the Lord many times diminiſheth and taketh away from us the goods and riches of this life, that ſo we may more carefully ſeeke after the things of a better life: ſo that afflictions are like a great ſtorme at Sea, to make the godly wiſh to be in the haven; as the waters of the Deluge, the more they increaſed, the higher they bare up the Arke: ſo the waters of afflictions, the greater they are, the higher they lift up the ſoule towards Heaven; according to that of St. *Bernard*, by the Lords corrections we contemne earthly things, ſaith he, and love heavenly. And therefore as *Zeno* having ſuffered ſhipwrack, became the Scholer of *Crates*, and ſtudied Philoſophy, and after ſaid, it was a happy ſhipwrack that made him affect ſuch excellent knowledge: ſo may we ſay more truly, it was a bleſſed ſickneſſe, a bleſſed poverty, a bleſſed impriſonment, or the like, that cauſed us to looke towards the Kingdome of Heaven.

Philippians 1. 23.

Bern. de Cæna Dom. ſer. 10.

Diog. Laert. in vita Zen.

Affliction is one meanes of keeping us from hell.

Nay, I dare ſay, that afflictions ſave us from Hell and condemnation; for, if God ſhould let us alone, we being in proſperity, would never reſt, untill we run our ſelves even head-long into Hell: like unto fooliſh children, if they be not hindred, will run into the fire, or into the ditch, &c. And therefore it is the Lords mercy, to lay the Rod upon our backs, that ſo we may bethink our ſelves of the danger whereon we ſtand, and ſo may labour to prevent it. This is the ſame which Job ſpeaketh,

keth, that the Lord openeth the ears of men by afflictions, &c. Job 33. 16. 18. When a man is frantick, and is desperately minded to burne or drowne himselfe, can any, in such a case, do him a greater benefit than to watch him, and to prevent him of that desperate enterprize? so likewise, there cannot be a greater profit and benefit to us, than when we are ready to burn and drown our selves in wofull perdition by our sins, that then the Lord by his gracious and loving corrections should stay us and hold us back: nay, nay, afflictions doe fit and prepare us for the Kingdome of Heaven, as the Apostle saith in 2 Thess. 1. 5. that by afflictions and persecutions they were counted worthy of Gods Kingdome; for, as the parching heat of the Sun ripeneth the corne, and fitteth it for the barn, so doe afflictions ripen the godly for Gods barn. And this is done two waies: First, because by troubles and afflictions (as I have shew'd you a little before) we are purged and purified from our sins. Our Saviour saith, Mat. 6. 29. that *Solomon* in all his Royalty, was not cloathed like one of the Lillies of the field, and yet we know the Lillies have a winter to wither in. From whence again let us learn this for our comfort, that although the Lord thus in adversity hath dejected and cast us down, yet let us know, that through the power of his might, we may have a time to spring and flourish again: and therefore we may with St. *Augustine* conclude and say, the Lord smiteth us, that he may heale us, and he killeth us, that we may not die from him.

Afflictions make us heires of Heaven.

Confess. August. lib. 2.

Again secondly, afflictions make us fit for Heaven, because it is a means to work holinesse in us, without which we cannot see the Lord, Heb. 12. 14. God will

not ſuffer the graces of his children (then as you ſee) to lie idle and to ruſt in them, but by afflictions he will rather exerciſe them, and bring them to the light, as St. *Auguſtine* ſaith well: that afflictions are not a puniſhment for ſin, but a triall of our vertue. And firſt, the faith of Gods children are hereby tried and manifeſted. When a man is in no danger nor miſery, then it is an eaſie matter for him to believe; but when he groaneth under the burden of afflictions, and ſeemeth even to be quite forſaken of the Lord, then by the power of his faith to cry as it is, Pſal. 22. 1. my God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me? or with Job, though he kill me, yet will I truſt in him, &c. Job 13. 15. this is a matter of great difficulty. We think we are ſtrong enough, untill we be put to triall, as many vain Cowards in the middeſt of their Cups, will make great boaſt of their valour, but when they go into the field are very Cowards.

Auguſt. de civit. D. i lib. 5. c. 3.

Seneca, an heathen man, that never knew what the valour of a true Chriſtian meant, could yet ſay of morall fortitude, that it withereth and becommeth feeble, if it have not an adverſary to encounter withall. The skill of a Pilot is beſt diſcerned in the greateſt tempeſt, and the courage of a Souldier in the hotteſt skirmiſh: ſo the fortitude of a Chriſtian Souldier appeareth moſt in the greateſt and heavieſt afflictions.

De divina provident.

How can it be known what courage a man hath to endure ſickneſſe and poverty, impriſonment, &c. if he alwaies have his health and liberty, and abound in riches: Moreover, their patience is by this meanes made known; for patience is a vertue, which is alwaies neceſſary for us, but if it be not exerciſed, then we ſhall have

have little uſe of it ; as when a ſword is ruſted in the ſheath, a man may then be wounded by his adverſary before he can draw it forth : So when patience is not tryed, the Divell may wound a man to death, before he be able to defend himſelfe therewith.

Againe, by this meanes our love to God is moſt of all declared : It is not any thing worth for a man to love God, when all things proſper with him, and ſucceed according to his owne deſire ; now if a man ſhould not love God then, even in the judgement of the Devil, it were pitty of his life. For he could ſay, when the Lord commended *Job*, doth *Job* ſerve God for naught? *&c.* Job 1.9. 10. nay he that ſhall only love God in this reſpect, may ſeeme to love him only for what you will give me, rather then for his owne ſake : But he that cleaveth unto God in the time of affliction, when all things goe croſſe with him, that is a ſigne and token of true love indeed. Thus we ſee how the graces of Gods children are manifeſted in afflictions more then they could be in proſperity. As Bricks if they be not throughly hardened in the fire, will by and by be diſſolved if they happen to touch water. So unleſſe the graces of Gods children be continually exerciſed, otherwiſe the leaſt affliction that is will overcome them.

Spices never give a ſweeter ſmell then when they are pounded and beaten in a morter ; ſo the graces of God in his children are never ſo fragrant and odoriferous, as when they are (as it were) pounded and beaten by afflictions, according to that ſpeech of the Apoſtle, Rom. 5. 3. 4. Tribulation bringeth forth patience, *&c.* whereunto agreeth that of Saint *Auguſtine*, afflictions daunteth not the patience and fortitude of them that

Auguſt. de civit. Dei lib. 8. chap. 13.

that be good, neither rooteth godlineſſe out of their mindes, but by exerciſing of it maketh it more fruitfull. And ſaith Saint *Bernard*, the fire of Afflictions trieth the graces of the godly, but it doth not conſume them. As a skilfull Phyſitian many times preſcribes medicines to preſerve from ſickneſſe: ſo doth the Lord uſe Afflictions to preſerve his children from ſin; nay, by Afflictions we are made conformable unto Chriſt, for he was not exempted from the croſſe. God had one Son without ſin (ſaith *Calvin*) but none without afflictions. But how is it that ſome wicked ones are afflicted as well as the godly? St. *Auguſtine* hath an excellent ſaying for this: Although (ſaith he) the godly and the wicked are alike afflicted, yet they are diſtant one from the other, *Manet diſſimilitudo paſſorum in ſimilitudine paſſionum*: for, there remaineth (ſaith he) an unlikeneſſe of the ſufferers, in the likeneſſe of their ſufferings: for, as under one and the ſame fire gold ſhineth and gliſtereth, and chaffe ſmoaketh: and under one and the ſame flaile the ſtraw is broken in pieces, and the corne is purged: neither are the lees therefore mingled with the Oyl, becauſe they are ſtrained out in one and the ſame preſſe: ſo one and the ſame violence ruſheth upon the godly and the wicked, which trieth, purifieth, and melteth the one, but it damneth, deſtroyeth, and utterly undoeth the other. So great a matter it is, not what things one ſuffereth, but how he is qualified that ſuffereth; for one and the ſame motion cauſeth the dung to ſtinke horribly, and the oyntment to ſmell moſt ſweetly: ſo that afflictions are like the red Sea, wherein the Egyptians were drowned and the Iſraelites were ſaved. And withall know this, that there is no greater cauſe of diſcomfort

Bern. in Pſal. 91. Serm. 5.

Calvin. Inſtit. lib. 3. cap. 8. ſect. 1.

Auguſt. de civit. Dei lib. 1. c. 8.

comfort to a child of God, than to be altogether free from troubles and afflictions.

And therefore SENECA calleth a ſecure life, which is not ſubject to croſſes, the dead Sea, affirming, that when a man hath nothing to ſtir him up, and prick and egge him forwards, nothing to trye the conſtancy and firmeneſſe of his minde, but lie as it were buried in idleneſſe, *Non eſt tranquillitas malitia eſt:* it is not tranquility, but a dead calme; and therefore ſaith BERNARD, it is good for us to beare the rod of correction, leſt we feel the hammer of confuſion. Sen. Epiſt. 68. Bern. in Pſal. 91. Serm. 9.

To conclude then in a word or two, from hence then we will make three uſes. Firſt, let us learn patience in our affliction, and that from the Apoſtle, Heb. 12. 9. if we were obedient to our earthly Parents, then let us be much more to our heavenly: and as the Prophet ſaith, Micah 7 9. becauſe we have ſinned againſt the Lord, therefore beare his afflictions with patience; and as the Lord ſendeth afflictions with a right hand, let not us take them with a left. An old Courtier that had ſerved CALIGULA, CLAUDIUS, and NERO, three cruell tyrants and Emperours of Rome, being demanded how he could eſcape the dangers of thoſe times, wherein ſo many Chriſtians were put to death? he anſwered, even by taking benefits thankfully, and by putting up injuries patiently. 1. Uſe.

Secondly, let this teach us to perſwade our ſelves throughly of this great and excellent good that afflictions bring with them, that ſo we may count it exceeding joy, as the Apoſtle adviſeth, Jam. 1. 2. Afflictions to the ſoule, are as Phyſick to the body: but as commonly, that Phyſick which is moſt wholſome, is withall moſt untoothſome: ſo that affliction which is moſt profitable, is for the moſt part moſt diſtaſtfull. As the Plant which is called Chriſts Thorne, is extream bitter, both in the root and in the leaves, and in the branches; but yet is very medicinable: ſo afflictions, though they be moſt bitter and unſavoury, yet the Lord our moſt skilfull Phyſitian, maketh moſt ſoveraigne medicines thereof to heale the infirmities of his children, Pſal. 103. 3 Whereby it becometh more profitable unto them, than (in regard of their corruption) ever proſperity could be. 2. Uſe. Calvin lib. 24. cap. 14.

Thirdly, and laſtly, this teacheth us to endeavour by all means to gain by ſuch croſſes and afflictions as God ſhall lay upon us; for, it 3. Uſe.

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is as grievous a ſin as we can commit, for to harden our hearts when Gods hand is upon us, as the Lord complained of the Jewes, I have ſmitten your children in vaine, ſaith he, Jer. 2. 30. for they have received no correction. To end. Afflictions do beget in us humility, and humility doth lift us up above the earth; poverty in ſpirit above the water; contrition above the aire; good workes above the fire; faith, hope, love, diſcretion, conſtancy, temperance, and righteouſneſſe; theſe ſeven do advance us above the ſeven Planets, our converſation above the Emperiall heavens, purity of heart doth carry us up even to the very ſight of God, and unto the glory of the bleſſed. For, three places God hath appointed his children to live in, the womb, the earth, and the Heavens: in the womb, but a narrow place, and for a ſhort time, ſome nine months.

In the earth, a place of greater extent, and a longer ſeaſon, ſome ſeventy, or eighty yeares, as I have ſhewed before.

But laſtly, in heaven is a place of extent without limit, and for terme without time, even for ever and ever. As the ſecond of theſe places for length of time exceeds the firſt; ſo the third far exceeds them both; for it is without limit of locall ſcite, and without all determination of time for length of daies. Now the God of peace give us grace to make a right uſe of our Afflictions whilſt we live in this mortall body, that ſo in the end we dying, may riſe to the life immortall both of ſoule and body, to live with God for ever, in the higheſt heavens. Amen, Amen, ſay I.

FINIS.